

**All GP Practices and Cervical Screening
Sample Taker Locations in Durham,
Darlington and Tees**

19th January 2015

Dear Colleague

Re: Inappropriate Cervical Screening Samples

It has been brought to the attention of NHS England that cervical screening samples are being taken inappropriately. Please ensure that all sample takers within your organisation are aware that cervical screening samples should **not** be taken from:

- **Women aged less than 24.5 years or older than 64 years** - screening is only appropriate for those who have been invited within the age range of the national screening programme.
- **Symptomatic women** – screening is **not** an appropriate diagnostic test. If a woman of any age has clinical symptoms (including post-menopausal bleeding), the attached DOH guidelines¹ should be followed (note this applies to all women not just those under 24 years).
- **Women with a negative HPV result within last three years** - if a woman has a negative HPV test on the first sample taken after treatment (not punch biopsy) in colposcopy, the recall will be three years (regardless of age). It is imperative that this is not overridden by a further sample taken 1 year later. If there is any uncertainty over the HPV result, then either check the recall on Open Exeter or contact the cytology laboratory.

In order to ensure that the Cervical Screening Programme is safe and effective, national screening criteria **must** be adhered to by all sample takers.

If you have any queries about the content or detail in this letter please contact england.cane.screeningimms@nhs.net or call 011382 53017.

Yours faithfully



Dr Malathi Natarajan
Screening and Immunisation Lead



Dr Claire Bradford
Head of Public Health Commissioning

Enc (1): <http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical/publications/doh-guidelines-young-women.pdf>